

Against the Grain

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Charleston 2018: Closing Session Presentation

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Charleston 2018: Closing Session Presentation

by **Stephen Rhind-Tutt** (President, Fairfax House Group, LLC) <rhindtutt@fairfaxhouse.com>



It's only a few days, but 350 speakers deliver over 200 presentations, 146 exhibitors showcase their wares and over 1,600 attendees have countless conversations over breakfasts, lunches, dinners and drinks. To pick just a few themes from so much information for an article like this isn't easy...but here goes anyway!

IEEE predicted ten technology trends to watch in 2018¹ — and sure enough most of these were covered at the conference. Seven sessions addressed issues of **security and privacy** — with much attention paid to the inadequacies of existing authentication and identity schemes. Eighteen sessions dealt with issues around **collaboration and community**, close to double the number in 2012.

In general technology circles “Artificial Intelligence” is undoubtedly a hot topic. This wasn't obviously reflected in the program with no sessions explicitly including AI in their title and only one mentioning big data: **Turn the Page: The New Data Realities for Librarians**. Perhaps this is because AI is really a catch-all for techniques that librarians and publishers have used for many years. Machine Aided Indexing, text data mining, data aggregation, character recognition and automated classification aren't new to our space — the main development is that processing power has increased to make these tools faster, cheaper and easier to use. This in turn is leading to new developments like voice and handwriting recognition, better data visualizations and tools for analysis — all of which were covered as part of other presentations.

In **This is the Future Libraries Want**, Margaret Wolfe and Andrew French detailed which of these technologies were expected to impact libraries in the upcoming years. See chart p.38 titled “Q3: Which technologies will be adopted by libraries in the next 10 years,” also available in color at <https://schr.dnshosting.com/2018charlestonconference/f8/This%20is%20the%20Future%20Libraries%20Want.pdf>.

Only two sessions dealt explicitly with Virtual/Augmented/Mixed reality. **Carl Grant** and I aimed to explain the technology and give practical examples in **Is Your Library Prepared for the Reality of Virtual Reality?**, while **Thomas Lee**, **Tom Scheinfeldt** and **Michael Young** presented **Charles VR: A Virtual Reality Reconstruction of the Coronation Mass of Emperor Charles V in Bologna in 1530**.

No audit of recent tech trends would be complete without a mention of blockchain. **Joris Van Rossum's** presentation **Blockchain: The Big Picture for Publishing!**, explained the technology in terms that I could understand easily, and even better, gave a clear, practical example of how the technology can be applied to solve peer review. No slide he presented had more than a few sentences on it and yet it dealt effectively with the topic. A rare achievement for such a complex topic!

Here's what struck me as the dominant themes of the show...

1. The Expansion of and Increasing Importance of Being Open

Yes, Open Access has been a frequent topic at library conferences over the past few years. Yes, it's been covered so many times that it's become boring. But, this time, it's different.

It's different in scale: in the 2012 Charleston Conference Program the word “open” appeared 5 times in presentation titles. This year it appeared 21 times. This time it wasn't just open access for journals or books, it was open science, open education resources, open scholarship, open annotation, open source publishing, open source tools, and open textbooks. In **Going it alone: Why University Presses are Creating Their Own eBook Collections**, Heather Staines, Terry Ehling, Sharla Lair and Charles Watkinson showed how open source tools could be used to re-engineer all aspects of scholarly communication — discovery, authentication, preservation and access.

It's different in definition: in their presentation **Words into Action: Building an Open Access Ecosystem**, Ivy Anderson, Katherine Dunn, Sybille Geisenheyner and Rice Major expanded the definition of open to include discovery, reusability, transparency and sustainability. In **The Library's Opportunity in Affordable Textbooks**, Joe Esposito, Mark

Cummings, Gwen Evans and Mark McBride did the same, pointing to the importance of being able to retain, reuse, revise, remix and redistribute content. The ask is no longer simply to make things accessible — it's much broader.

There was less philosophizing and **more concrete data**. We saw practical examples of impacts and outcomes. For example, **Words into Action**, showed detailed results for the CDL and how the RSC has “read and publish” arrangements in 44 institutions across 6 countries.

At the opening keynote, **Anthony Watkinson** asked pointedly how money is to be made from all this openness. I didn't see a clear answer during the show. Software publishers like to charge for their tools and so see little challenge with making content free. Many content creators favor free software tools, and plan to charge for the content. Creators of community believe their social networks will eventually result in plenty of revenue opportunities. But today the most revenues come from putting content behind paywalls. How is this to change? Will read and publish prove the solution? Will tools and services take over? It's still not clear.

2. Learning, Teaching, and Educational Tools Increasingly Belong in Libraries

Years ago, a librarian explained to me that textbooks had no place in the library. **Charleston 2018** showed the opposite, delivering 8 sessions with the word “Textbook” or “OER” in the title.

The Library's Opportunity in Affordable Textbooks detailed why this is so important for all academic libraries. **Mark Cummings**, presenting data from a **CHOICE** survey showed only 11.8% of instructors used books as instructional material against 93% for textbooks. As **Dr. Gerry Hanley**, the Director of **MERLOT** once told me — how does it make sense that materials students *might* need are available free in the library, but materials they *must* have need to be purchased? See chart p.38 titled “Textbooks constitute the core of all course-material adoptions.” The chart can be viewed in color online and the entire presentation can be downloaded from <https://schr.dnshosting.com/G8SM>.

The session went on to show libraries are uniquely able to help the academy in this area. They can solve the problem of discovery; they know how to evaluate, deliver and measure content. And most importantly they know how to negotiate licenses to save institutions money. In this session alone we heard of \$6m in savings from the CDL, \$8m in savings from the SUNY system and a staggering \$50m in savings for **OHIOLink**. Oh, and that's per year by the way!

3. Analytics — Ever Increasing Importance

My vote for “Top Graphic of the Show” goes to **Gwen Evans** in **Data Expeditions: Mining Data for Effective Decision-Making** session. A single graphic based on hundreds of thousands of data showing which journals are delivering the best and worst value... See data chart p.38, also available in color at https://schr.dnshosting.com/2018charlestonconference/75/Evans_Different_Views_Data_Charleston_2018.pdf.

I don't have a way to analyze the number of presentations that presented original data, but my impression is that it's never been larger. Budgets remain tight. Enrollments are down. There's not much room for increased tuition. Administrators urgently need to identify opportunities to save. At the same time the increasing electronic content and tools generate large amounts of data.

It is no surprise then that librarians turn to data to make their case. This is an area that will grow.

4. And the Over-riding Theme Was...

Sessions on adaptation and change have been a staple at Charleston over the years. Every year since 2012 there have been at least 5 sessions that included variants of these words in their title. This year there were close to 25. Such a level of change leads people to ask whether

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or not such change is within the existing mission.

Together the sessions of 2018 show where this change is taking us and what we need to do. Publishers are asked to find a way to serve their investors as well as their customers, even as open access erodes the pay-before-you-access business model that's worked well for hundreds of years. Librarians are asked to play a much more central role in the university — with new tools and services like providing e-textbooks, digital instruction, content dissemination and to reinvent and automate traditional roles as curators and intermediaries.

A quick web survey shows this is absolutely within the current remit of academic libraries. It's all about improving teaching and learning outcomes as these mission statements show:

George Mason: "...cultivation of innovative services and resources for teaching, learning, research and scholarship."

Central Washington University: "...to facilitate lifelong learning and research."

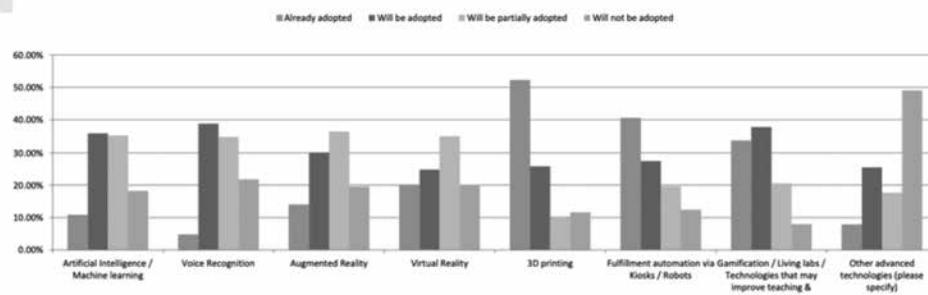
Kent State: "To deliver unparalleled opportunities for success in learning, research and discovery to our users."

Sessions end with a Q&A. In a session on OER a librarian asked about how urgent it was. The presenter's reply — "You need to get involved before outsiders make decisions for you that you don't like." It's that simple. If the library is to be central to the academy it must embrace the future quickly and deliver results across the entire institution. 🐼

Endnotes

1. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/top-10-technology-trends-for-2018-ieee-computer-society-predicts-the-future-of-tech-300571274.html>

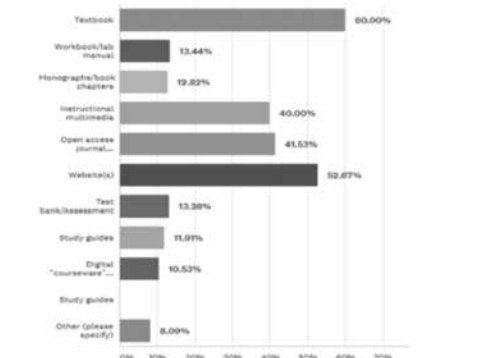
Q3: Which technologies will be adopted by libraries in the next 10 years



Textbooks constitute the core of all course-material adoptions



Instructional materials used by all instructors



Instructional materials used by instructors using all/some OER

✓ The Library's Opportunity in Affordable Textbooks
Joseph Esposito • Mark Cummings • Gwen Evans • Mark McBride



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librarycris/status/1060958326484357120.
Cris Ferguson noted in a tweet, "Broad trends for this year's conference include textbook affordability, all things open, and expanding the role of libraries."

All-in-all, following the conference on social media was impressively immersive. We can't wait to see how our online community grows and evolves in the coming years. Future conference-goers can get a taste of Charleston — the city and the conference — by checking out the Twitter and Facebook feeds. Attendees have additional opportunities to network and socialize. Best of all, when we come together

online, our experiences become shared experiences.

Readers can become part of our social media community through Twitter (<https://twitter.com/chsconf>), Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/chsconf>), or LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/charleston-conference/>) and keep the fun going until next year. 🐼